2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
OI20 Tiwi OI20

101 others that the culture of the Melville and Bathurst Islanders was markedly
121 different from that of the adjacent mainland people.

It seemed evident, also, that this difference in the cultures was the result
101 of isolation for which two possible factors were responsible: (a) the natural
131 water barrier created by the Dundas and Clarence Straits (Fig. 1), and (b)
182 the inability of the Tiwi to cross those swift and dangerous tideways in their
501 primitive canoes. These canoes consisted of no more than a folded sheet of eucalyptus bark, sewn together at either end with strips of lawyer vine, caulked with mud, and strengthened at the gunwales with light saplings. The old men of Melville Island assured me that, before Cooper brought across the mainland wooden canoe (1905) bark canoes were their only means of water transport.

174 I am convinced, from my personal experience with similar canoes in
501 north-eastern Arnhem Land, and my sea journeys across the Dundas and Clarence Straits, that the bark canoes of the Tiwi were far too weak to have withstood the buffetings of those turbulent waters. Nor would it have been possible for the mainlanders to have made the journey before they acquired
[175] the wooden canoes from the Malays, which reliable historical records indi-
[177] cate was not before the end of the eighteenth century.[8] Previous to that time, these people would have had only a bark canoe similar to that used by the Melville and Bathurst Islanders. It would be some time, too, after the aborigines acquired their new wooden craft, before they would be sufficiently skilled to make that perilous journey to Melville Island, even
[609] had they wished to do so. Further, the Tiwi were notably unfriendly and killed anyone who visited their shores. It is likely, then, that during the historically short time that the aborigines of the mainland possessed the wooden canoe, their visits would have had little, if any, effect on the culture of the Tiwi.

From this evidence, it appears certain that for an unknown, and possibly
177 a lengthy period, the aborigines of the Tiwi tribe have been almost, if not
114 completely, isolated from outside cultural influences.

This supposition is supported by Hart (1930, p. 170), who states that, "It was impossible, in fact, quite unnecessary, for them (the Tiwi) to visit the mainland in their bark canoes, . . . Until the advent of white men, the Melville Islanders were not aware that any other people existed but themselves."

Foelsche (1882, p. 17), however, states that "The Melville Islanders occasionally visited the mainland for the purpose of stealing lubras (women),

[8] Mountford, 1956, p. 410.

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 OI20 Tiwi OI20

They are occasionally coloured and decorated with ochre, some of the designs being very pleasing to the eye. Some spears, moreover, have human 471
hair strings wound round the shaft, immediately below the head, for a distance of [531]
10 centimetres or more, and this is kept in place with beeswax.

Canoes.

Elsewhere I have referred to the marked absence among the northern 501
Australian tribes of anything but the most primitive crafts and such innovated forms as have resulted from the contact with the white and yellow races. They are, therefore, not to be considered as truly indigenous canoes. On Bathurst Island, however, conditions are different; due, perhaps, in the first place, to its insularity (as well as the numerous estuaries and rivers that cross [133]
the land), and, secondly, to the proximity of Melville Island, which is separated from it by only a narrow stretch of calm water known as Apsley Strait. The latter is barely a mile in width at its narrowest points. Numerous canoes are in use within this Strait, and occasionally, when wind and water are favourable, they venture a short distance out to sea. One type is principally in use, namely, a large bark-canoe measuring about 560 centimetres in length (*vide* Plate X, Figs. 1 and 2). It is made of a single sheet of bark, usually from suitable, straight, clear 396
trunks of the woollybutt (*Eucalyptus miniata*) or the stringy-bark (*E. tetraloneta*) 501
(*vide* Plate XII, Fig. 1). It is cut from the tree by chopping transversely at the respective distances from the ground, then slitting it once vertically for the whole length and removing it by forcing the edge of the instrument under the bark and finally levering it off with pointed saplings. The outer side of this oblong piece of bark, which is rough, will become the inside surface of the canoe. At a distance of from 65 to 70 centimetres from either end, transverse cuts are made on the inside to a depth of half the thickness of the bark, and such thickness is removed from the whole of the surface lying away from the centre at either incision. Each end is thus reduced by half its original strength and material thereby becoming more pliable. The cutting is done with the sharp edge of a [237 412]
bivalve shell, usually a *Cyrena*. The subtilized ends of the sheet may, or may not, be held over a glowing fire to render them more pliant still. The sheet is folded lengthwise along its middle, and one or both ends kept together by vertical stakes, stuck in the ground and tied together at the top. The bottom corner of the fold is cut away in a very gentle upward slope. The two pieces of the fold are next held firmly together and cut in a more decisive upward direction from a point some 30 to 50 centimetres from the bottom edge end. The two freshly cut edges are neatly sewn with close, overcast stitches, and the same is done along the top horizontal edge for a distance of some 15 or 20 centimetres from the end. From the intervening space between the sewn parts at the top and bottom, an angular or curved segment is cut out in imitation of a fish-tail and its edges laced together in a like manner (*vide* Plate XI, Figs. 1 and 2). The thread used for these "run-on" stitches is in the form of strips from the split sheets of the

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 OI20 Tiwi OI20

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501 climbing palm (*Calamus Australis*).[1] Holes are previously pierced through the
[237 412] bark with an awl, made out of the leg-bone of a wallaby.

The stitches are made more secure and watertight by plastering them with
[237 314] wax from the comb of the wild bee (*Trigona sp.*) or with one of the several resins so extensively used by all natives. The inside corners are caulked with plastic clay and fibre, or resin. Two stays or struts of fairly stout timber, cut to the required length and inserted at the points where the bark was reduced to half its thickness, keep the sides of the canoe apart. From these points, therefore, the sides of the canoe converge to the bow at one end and to the stern at the other; while in between they are more or less parallel. The canoe, if there be any difference at all, is wider aft (74 cm.) than it is nearer the bow (55 cm.); the "fish-tail" incision, too, is acute and deep at the bow and more rounded and shallow at the stern (*vide* Plate XI, Figs. 1 and 2). Along the top, inner, edge of either side of the canoe, a straight strengthening pole is lashed with distant, unequally-spaced and grouped "run on" stitches of cane-strips. These structures lend considerable rigidity to the gunwale of the canoe; they do not extend throughout the whole length, but, being straight, are more or less parallel one to another, and do not enclose the stern or bow. Major Campbell,[2] in referring to the bark canoes seen by him while at Fort Dundas, states that "the gunwales are strengthened by two small saplings (such as grow in marshy places) fastened together at each end of the canoe." This method is more like that in use on the coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria to-day and was not observed on the islands by me. Long shoots of vines and strips of cane are wound crosswise from side to side of the canoe, and at the same time take in the strengthening-poles along the gunwale. Additional circumferential winding binds the separate cords into one thick rope. Four of such ties are spanned at equal distances, from one side to the other, along the straight edges of the canoe. They not only preserve its shape, but afford a ready means by which the craft may be carried.

501 The canoe is not decorated in any way, but smears of various colours are
[531] noticed both at the bow and the stern, resulting from the handling by fingers previously occupied in decorative work with ochre. When not in use the canoes are "housed" on a level piece of ground, under the overhanging branches of a shady banyan or guttapercha tree. They are laid in normal upright position (not inverted), and are kept so by short supports of timber stemmed against the sides. The bark thus dries in the required shape and does not become lop-sided.

Each canoe has its recognized place. Where a dense growth of mangroves
[487] skirts the foreshore, a regular approach to the water is kept clear by cutting away the trees. The paddles are laid within the canoes.

Quite a large number of natives may be carried in a canoe, if the occasion

[1] Compare narrative of Mr. Carron in MacGillivray's *Narrative Voyage H.M.S. "Rattlesnake,"* 1852, vol. ii, pp. 125 and 126; also P. P. King: *Narrative Survey Intertropical Western Coasts of Australia*, London, 1827, vol. i, p. 90.

[2] *Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc.*, London, vol. iv, 1834, p. 156.

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 OI20 Tiwi OI20

demands it; but usually, when on a simple turtle or dugong hunting expedition, two persons only occupy places in the craft, one near the bow and another near the stern (*vide* Plate X, Figs. 1 and 2). The boatmen, while propelling the craft, squat with their buttocks resting upon the heels and with their knees pressed against the sides. The weight of their body being thus well within the boat, its stability is thereby considerably increased.

Paddles.—Propulsion is effected by means of paddles which are made of hard wood. They have a single well-shaped blade and a rounded handle (*vide* Plate XII, Fig. 2). The edges of the blade are parallel or taper slightly towards the end, which is square or rounded. Apart from the marks left by the tomahawk used in its making, the implement is without ornamentation. In one case only, a circular collar was carved around the handle, immediately above the sloping shoulder of the blade. The longest paddle noted measured 167 centimetres in length, its blade 80; the shortest was 115 centimetres in length and its blade 45. The width of the blades ranges from 7 to 9 centimetres. Both hands clasp the paddle, which is dipped alternately on one side or the other as the occasion and the steering require it.

Balers.—Water that accumulates in the canoe, either by leakage or overwash in a rough sea, is removed by means of a baler which is made out of the melon shell[1] (*Melo diadema*). The columella of the shell is carefully cut away, leaving only the large body-whorl, which is used as a scoop (*vide* Plate XI, Figs. 3 and 4). The outer surface of the shell is painted with red and yellow ochre in large cross pattern, with a fine cross shading.

Dug-outs.—The dug-out canoes to which I have elsewhere referred[2] have, in all probability, been introduced by Malays from whom the natives obtain them by barter. Dr. Walter Roth has also proved that the dug-outs met with along the coast of Queensland are of Papuan origin. The form observed in Apsley Strait is without outrigger and hollowed out of a single tree trunk. The bow and stern are raised (*vide* Plate X, Fig. 2).

Corrobborees.

As with all primitive folk, song and dance constitute the ultimate stage of any social intercourse or festivity. The islanders are even more ready than their brothers on the mainland to resort to this means of entertainment. It thus happened that, wherever we came into contact with the blacks and presented them with divers small articles, a corrobboree was immediately inaugurated; even though the encounter happened to occur in the middle of the day. Corrobborees on the

[1] *Cf. Narrative Voyage H.M.S. "Rattlesnake,"* vol. ii, p. 17: "the baler (a melon shell) is in constant requisition."

[2] *Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Australia*, vol. xxxi, 1907, p. 53. Among others, note that Major Campbell says of the Port Essington natives that "such of the canoes as I saw were hollowed from the trunks of trees, like those of the Malays and were probably either left by these people or stolen from them," *Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc.*, London, vol. iv, 1834, p. 170.

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 OI20 Tiwi OI20

PLATE X.

501 Fig. 1. "Fish-tail" bark canoes, Apsley Strait.
Fig. 2. "Fish-tail" bark canoes and "dug-out" canoe in the distance, Apsley Strait. Melville Island in the background.

PLATE XI.

Figs. 1 and 2. Bow and stern of "fish-tail" bark canoe. $\frac{1}{10}$ natural size.
Figs. 3 and 4. Balers made out of the melon shell. Fig. 3 shows the painted decoration of the outer surface; while in Fig. 4 it is seen how the columella of the shell has been removed with a sharp cutting instrument. $\frac{1}{4}$ natural size.

PLATE XII.

314 Fig. 1. Forest scene on Bathurst Island. From the stringy-barked eucalyptus on the left side
396 of the picture, the bark has been removed for the purpose of making a canoe.
137 Another tree, which has been similarly treated, is seen in the background, near the centre of the picture. In the foreground note a tall specimen of the zamia-palm (*Cycas media*).
501 Fig. 2. Various types of paddles in use on Bathurst Island. About $\frac{1}{10}$ natural size.

PLATE XIII.

764 Figs. 1 and 2. Distant and near view of a native grave, surrounded by five carved and painted posts, Bathurst Island. Note the cleared space and the position of grave, viz.: at the junction between open woodland and thicket. A tall Bathurst Islander in seen in Fig. 2.

PLATE XIV.

415 Fig. 1. A melon-shell (*Melo diadema*) used as a drinking vessel. $\frac{1}{4}$ natural size.
Fig. 2. A *Fusus priesi* used as a drinking vessel. $\frac{1}{4}$ natural size.
Figs. 3 and 4. Drinking cups made out of folded sheets of paper-bark (*Melaleuca*). $\frac{1}{4}$ natural size.
532 Figs. 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e. Painted and carved posts of native grave shown in previous plate.
764 $\frac{1}{4}$ natural size.

PLATE XV.

415 Fig. 1. A series of four shells of the *Cyrena easingtonensis* which have been used for holding red, white and yellow earth-pigments to mix with water as required. $\frac{1}{3}$ natural size.
317 Fig. 2. Lumps of yellow ochre (on the left), white pipe-clay (in the centre), and red ochre (on
386 the right), used in the decoration of the grave posts shown in previous plate. $\frac{1}{4}$ natural size.
413 Fig. 3. Primitive paint brushes made by macerating the ends of short pieces of the shoots of the climbing palm (*Calamus Australis*). $\frac{1}{4}$ natural size.
301 Figs. 4 and 6. Special corrobboree arm-rings. $\frac{1}{4}$ natural size.
532 Fig. 5. A corrobboree mask (*l*). $\frac{1}{4}$ natural size.

PLATE XVI.

291 Figs. 1 and 2. Bathurst Island natives painting grave-posts. Note the cosmetic body-scars in
532 imitation of the leaf of the zamia palm (*Cycas media*).
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5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 OI20 Tiwi OI20

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FIG. 1.

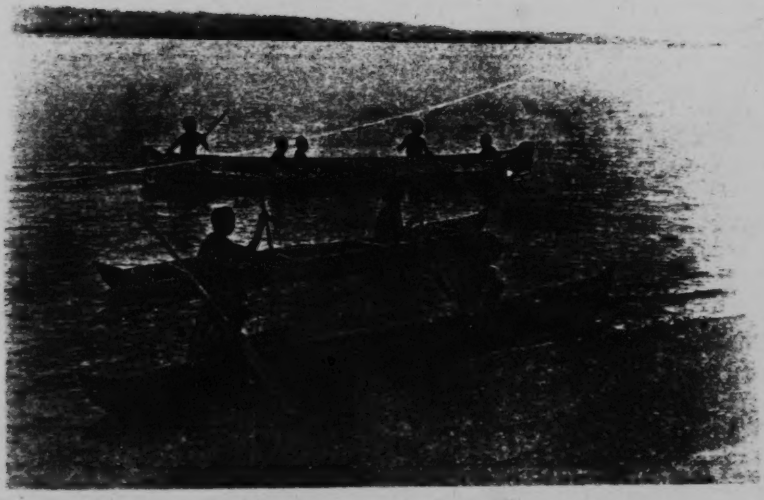

FIG. 2.

NOTES ON THE NATIVES OF BATHURST ISLAND, NORTH AUSTRALIA.

[END PLATE 4]

[FOR EXPLANATION SEE P. 322 – ANALYST]

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 O120 Tiwi O120

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[END PLATE 5]

[FOR EXPLANATION OF PLATE see p. 322 — ANALYST]

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 O120 Tiwi O120

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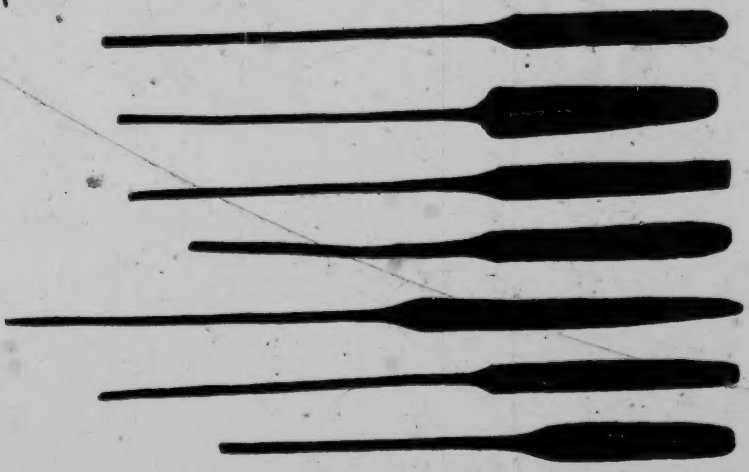

FIG. 2.

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FIG. 1.

NOTES ON THE NATIVES OF BATHURST ISLAND, NORTH AUSTRALIA.

[END PLATE 6]

[FOR EXPLANATION OF PLATE SEE p. 322 - ANALYST]

12:Goodale E-5 (1954) 1957 OI20 Tiwi OI20

lores and customs, and if the white people were disappointed by his performance in settlement work, the old men of the tribe were just as pleased by his attitude to his native heritage.

Agnes, a slim tall girl of twenty, was even shyer than Albert and to cover up this shyness she always smiled or giggled. She was a cheerful soul to have around. Feeling that the responsibility of the care and feeding of the *murandanga* (female white person) was a little more than their young shoulders could bear, Albert asked Big Jack, his older brother, a "big man" in the tribe to come along. At the last minute a fifth member was added, Tchuwiunga, a tiny black-and-white puppy of about eight weeks old.

Number one canoe was the largest canoe and was considered the safest. The Malay fishermen, a century or more ago, had taught the Melville Islanders how to hew a rough canoe from a single log, but the art had never been perfected. This canoe measured about fifteen feet in length by about three feet in width at the center. There were small platforms in the bow and stern which

Fig. 1. Setting off in Number one canoe

12:Goodale E-5 (1954) 1957 O120 Tiwi O120

served as seats except when the mast was mounted in the forward platform.

It took us quite a while to load, but we finally launched out into the bay about mid-morning. In the stern, sat Albert, his knees folded under so that as he lifted and dipped the heavy ironwood paddle only his arms and back supplied the power. He kept in perfect time with Big Jack who sat just in front of him. They would both paddle on the same side for about six strokes and then bringing the paddles overhead would continue on the other side with perfect rhythm. Agnes and Tchuwiunga sat amidships among the rolls of blankets and cartons of food, while I surveyed the scene from the forward seat, clutching my waterproofed KLM overnight bag containing my camera, toothbrush, and change of clothing and the ever-present supply of pencils and "six-penny" notebooks.

The bay was smooth, too smooth, for not a ripple broke the gently rolling surface. We could, however, see and hear breakers on Piriu Point; so, with the promise of some wind to propel the craft, and incidentally break the close, muggy atmosphere, Albert and Big Jack paddled strongly and swiftly so that soon we reached the opposite shore and began to work our way up to the point. Although the men were silent, Agnes entertained us with the singing of other women's love songs. All women, regardless of the degree of affection they have for their husband, have lovers and compose long love songs extolling the chosen man's virtues. Agnes, however, only sang her song about her lover, Ginger-Two, when out of audible range of her husband.

About noon the canoe rounded the point and at once a strong easterly wind prompted us to raise the sail. This required little effort as the thin and greatly patched canvas was permanently attached to the 12-foot mast and boom with wire. All that was needed was to drop the mast through a hole in the forward platform and let the boom fall into place. Unfortunately it was soon apparent that the forces of nature and the design of the canoe were against us; the wind was too strong and without a keel the canoe could not head into the wind which was dead against us. The mast was unstepped, the sail furled, and the paddles taken up once more, but now instead of a calm sea we faced large rollers, some of which broke under the force of the wind. It was heavy going; Agnes

12:Goodale E-5 (1954) 1957 OI20 Tiwi OI20

Fig. 4. A casuarina grove

123 clutched Tchuwiunga more tightly
501 and I hugged my KLM bag while the two men worked to head the canoe into the largest waves while trying at the same time to head in [137] towards the shore. This meant taking a good many not so large waves broadside and we got very wet. Facing sternwards, I could not see the waves, so if a particularly [823] large one (Agnes called them "female waves!") approached, I would be given a few seconds warning and would duck the breaking spray which would cover the boat and its occupants. The only miserable one was the puppy who presented a very puzzled and hurt expression as he peered out from under the folds of Agnes's *naga*. For the rest of us the cold spray was a welcome relief from the burning sun.

Once in close to the shore, our skilful paddlers brought the canoe safely onto the beach, riding in on one of the breakers. We unloaded everything, although we intended to stop only for lunch, for the canoe would soon be swamped by the sea if left alone. After unloading, Albert swam the canoe out beyond the breakers where he anchored it with a large rock.

123 Then we climbed the low dunes close to the shore and came to a grove of casuarinas. These provided much appreciated shade but a very uncomfortable carpet of spiny seed pods. Taking up our two billy cans, Agnes led me to the back of the grove where she [312] showed me a small well. There were many footprints around the sandy hole which were identified as belonging to Black Joe's mob, the natives who had preceded us. They had, however, not depleted the well for in the bottom was a small puddle, and since this was at the very end of the six months dry season, it was considered fortunate that there was any water at all. Agnes carefully tasted

13:Barclay J-3 (ca. 1939)1939 O120 Tiwi O120

726 received any serious damage, and it seemed to have been a most enjoyable occasion. An islander, who had seen the world from the decks of many luggers, made a remark that was truer than he knew, "When white feller go to war, he takem rifle, he takem

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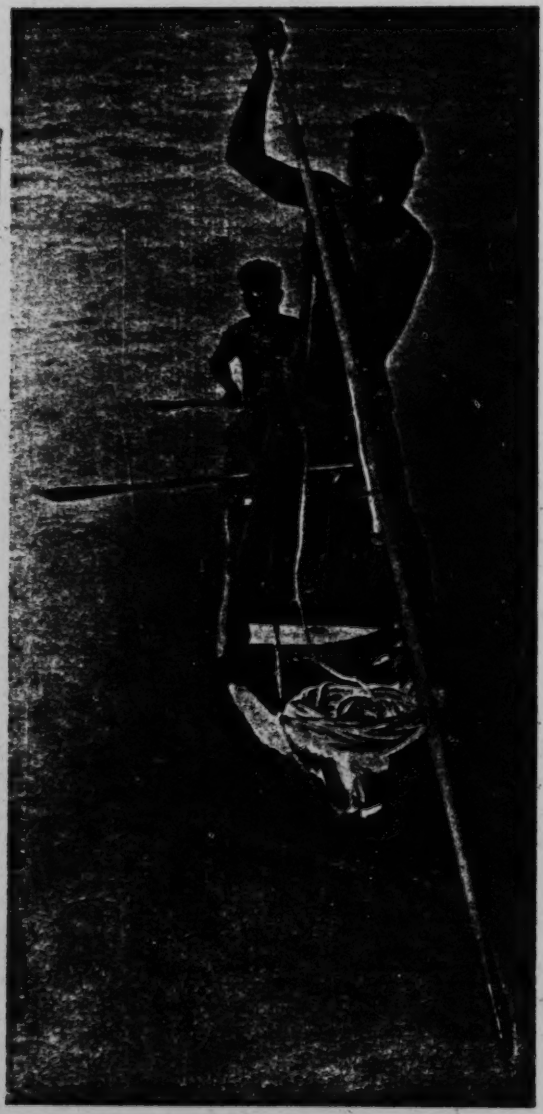

HUNTING TURTLE, FROM A DUG-OUT CANOE NEAR BATHURST ISLAND.

bomb. Some feller *must* be killed! White feller silly b——!" It cannot be said that the mission fathers have a dull time at Bathurst Island.

797 There are two sisters of the order at the Mission Station. In addition to teaching the girls, they attend to all household mat-

[P. 18(A)]